REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed July 12, 2004. This Office Action has been made final. The Examiner's comments in the Office Action have been carefully considered.

The applicant respectfully requests an extension of time of three months to re-set the due date for response from October 12, 2004, to January 12, 2005. A check in the amount of $1,020.00 is enclosed in payment of the three-month extension fee. In the event that this amount is insufficient, please charge any remainder due to our account no. 10-0100.

It is noted that the Examiner has approved the new title and has withdrawn the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §101 since the claims previously filed were now statutory. However, the Examiner has continued to reject 1-8 on the grounds of prior art. In this connection, the Examiner has indicated that the argument on page 9 of the previous Amendment that Lin et al. does not teach a parallel provider that makes roaming contract with the individual service providers, as the Examiner has not given patentable weight to the recitation "makes a roaming contract with the plurality of individual service providers" because that recitation occurs in the preamble. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's position that anything recited in the preamble to be given no weight. However, in order to expedite the prosecution of this application, claims 1-8 have been canceled without prejudice, and new claims 12-16 have been added. These new claims recite the limitations of the apparatus in the body of the claims. The Examiner has indication that the inclusion of such language in the body of the claims would be a basis for the Examiner's reconsideration of the claims.

The Examiner has also rejected the claims as being either fully anticipated by the prior art

or rendered obvious thereby, for reasons set forth in paragraphs 7-10 of the Office Action. Here the Examiner has, to a great extent, reiterated the rejections in the previous Office Action. However, for reasons previously submitted, and in light of the amendments to the claims, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the prior art rejections.

According to an embodiment of the present invention shown in Fig. 3, in addition to individual internet services providers (ISPs) 14A, 14B, 14C, and so on ... , a parallel internet service provider (parallel ISP)16 is provided. The parallel ISP 16 is the same as the normal ISPs 14A, 14B, 14C, and so on, ..., except that it has no access points for connection with the internet. The parallel ISP 16 makes a so-called "roaming contract" with the individual internet service providers ISPs 14A, 14B, 14c, and so on, ... The access points APs function to connect user terminals 50, 52, ..., contracting with the ISPs to the internet 12 and a roaming function of connecting the user terminals 50, 52, and so on, ... contracting with a parallel internet service provider (parallel ISP) 16 to the internet 121.

As shown in Fig. 5, when an access point (e.g., 20A1) of a selected individual ISP (ISP 14A) is requested by a user terminal (e.g., 50) to connect the user terminal to the access point 10A1 (step S2), it is determined whether or not the user is a member of the parallel ISP (step S6). The request of step S6 contains a connection ID and a password. As the connection ID (account), an electronic mail address "KOJIMA@PARALLELNET.COM", including a domain name is used, unlike in the conventional dial-up connection. At step S6, it is determined whether or not the user is a member of the parallel ISP according to whether or not the connection ID includes a suffix (the domain name "PARALLELNET.COM", in this case).

If the user is not a member of the parallel ISP, the access point authenticates the

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connection ID (step S8). If the authentication indicates "O.K.", permission is given to the access

point 20A1 to connect the user terminal 50 thereto in step S10, and the connection of the user

terminal to the internet is initiated, as well as is the accounting function performed by accounting

server 26.

If the user is a member of the parallel ISP, the authentication server transfers a connection

request (connection ID and password) to the authentication server 32 of the parallel ISP 16. The

authentication server 32 of the parallel ISP 16 authenticates a connection request transferred from

each of the ISPs 14A, 14B, 14C, and so on, ..., and returns an authentication result to it.

In step S16, the authentication server 22 of the ISP 14A receives the authentication result.

If the result is not good, the processing ends. If it is good, permission is given to the access point

20A1 to connect the user terminal 50 thereto in step S18, and the connection of the user terminal

to the internet is initiated and the use log data (user, use time, etc.) is recorded in the accounting

server 26. If, in step S20, the connection is completed, the use log data is transferred from the

accounting server 26 of the ISP 14A to the accounting server 36 of the parallel ISP 16 in step 22,

and the processing ends. As described above, the individual ISPs 14A, 14B, 14C, and so on, ...,

charge not the user but the parallel ISP 16 for the connection fee. The accounting server 36 of

the parallel ISP 16 sums up the fees of the individual ISPs 14A, 14B, 14C, and so on, ..., charges

the users for them, and collects money from the users.

As described above, if a user simply makes a contract with a single parallel provider that

is under roaming contract in advance with a plurality of individual providers, he or she can

connect to the internet selectively using access points of a number of individual providers. Since

the user contracts with only the parallel provider, he or she need not manage a plurality of

accounts or a plurality of e-mail addresses but can do the e-mail in a unified manner. In order to

avoid the duplicate user names in determining an electronic mail address, a number of sub-

domain names are prepared and one of them can be added to a domain name. In most instances,

a user can have an electronic mail address, including the user name that the he or she desires.

The Prior Art

U.S. Patent No. 6,282,575 to Lin et al. only teaches the operation of authentication server

102, network server 104, routing manager 106, client 108, and network router 112, as shown in

Fig. 2. There is neither teaching nor suggesting in this prior reference of any kind of a parallel

provider that would be able to make a roaming contract with the individual service provides, one

that would have no access point of its own.

U.S. Patent No. 5,608,778 to Partridge, III, shows only a transaction for obtaining

consumer credit for a cellular telephone. It does not teach nor suggest how to determine whether

the user is a member of an individual service provider or a member of a parallel service provider,

one that would be connected to the plurality of individual service provides and that would make a

roaming contract with the plurality of individual service providers.

The prior art reference to the Wayback Machine teaches only a hotmail service, without

teaching nor suggestion of a parallel provider device that could comprise the means for receiving

a user name from a user terminal of the user requesting the sign-up. Neither does this reference

teach or suggest any means for determining whether e-mail addresses including a combination of

the input user name and sub-domains of the parallel service provider device have been registered

so as to be able to distinguish one of the non-registered e-mail addresses, as taught in the subject

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application's claim 16.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that this application is now in condition. Early

allowance and issuance is, accordingly, respectfully solicited.

Applicant hereby petitions that any and all extensions of time of the term necessary to render this response timely be granted. COSTS FOR SUCH EXTENSION(S) AND/OR ANY OTHER FEE DUE WITH THIS FEE DUE WITH THIS PAPER THAT ARE NOT FULLY COVERED BY AN ENCLOSED CHECK MAY BE CHARGED TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT #10-0100.
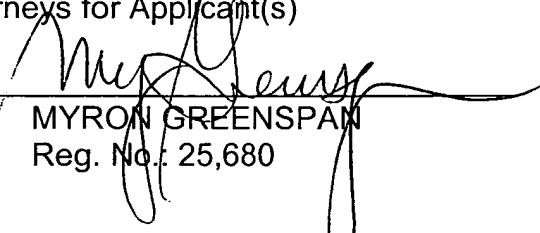

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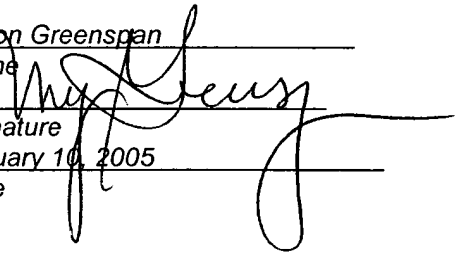LACKENBACH SIEGEL LLP
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